

***Kaspar the Titanic Cat***

By Michael Morpurgo

This historical fiction story is told from the view point of Johnny Trott, an orphan who lives and works as a bellhop at the London's Savory Hotel. When Countess Kandinsky arrives with her cat, Kaspar, Johnny is put in charge of the care and daily walks of her pet. When tragedy befalls the Countess, Johnny soon finds himself with a new cat and new friend, whom he must keep hidden from the head housekeeper old "Skullface". Soon Kaspar and Johnny meet Lizziebeth, a young guest who soon becomes good friends and so begins many adventures. When Lizziebeth and her family leave to travel home on the maiden voyage of the Titanic, Johnny and Kaspar go along to help them embark on their homeward bound trip. Johnny soon finds his mouth, telling Lizziebeth she can keep Kaspar, and then shortly thereafter finds he has become a stowaway on the ship. The reader will keep turning pages to find out what happens next in the adventures of Johnny, Kasper, and Lizziebeth. Will Johnny get in trouble for being a stowaway? Will Kasper and the rest of Lizziebeth's family survive the Titanic? Written for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and illustrated with simplistic charcoal drawings, this story will appeal to a variety of readers and bring much enjoyment. A definite must-purchase for school and public libraries.

Pat Thompson, WSC

***Love Puppies and Corner Kicks***

By R. W. Krech

The main character, Andrea, is forced to move with her family to Scotland while her dad is involved with an exchanged teacher program. She encounters the usual problems: acceptance of peers and her first crush, but a stuttering problem recurs, giving her self-confidence a hit. This book has a sweet ending, is funny, and will appeal to middle school girls especially. This book is recommended for students between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades and for any library collection.

Jennie Schneider

***The Talent Thief***

By Alex Williams

Two children, Adam and Cressida, go to Fortescue's festival of young talents, where Cressida is performing. Adam befriends Amy and the two of them uncover an evil plot by the event sponsor to steal the children's talents. A good read—appealing to both boys and girls. I like a story where the underdog surprises everyone and comes through. Adam finds he actually *does* have "talents".

Jennie Schneider

***Eye of the Storm***

By Kate Messner

It's sometime in the future and server storms are an everyday occurrence around the world. No one is safe except those who live in Placid Meadows, a development Jaden's father is responsible for building. Now Jaden has to move there to take in a science camp, as well as to be close to her father for the summer. She makes friends with Risha and Alex. Risha lives in Placid Meadows while Alex is from a farm just outside of the town. When Jaden and Alex team up on research to help control the storms, they find out things they were never meant to know. Now Jaden, Alex, and Risha try to do what they can to correct things. Well researched, you almost feel like you are part of the storms when they are occurring. The writing, however, does not always flow. There are times when the rambling will have you questioning whether or not you want to continue reading, while at other times it's a real page-turner. Not a bad book, but not a great book either. This book is recommended for readers in grades 4-6 and for any library.

Diane Limoges

***Queen of Secrets***

By Jenny Meyerhoff

Now that Essie is a sophomore and has made the cheerleading squad, she is hoping her life is going to improve. She has had a crush on Austin, the school's quarterback for the past year. Though her friends don't approve, she is excited when he starts to notice her. There is one small problem. Her cousin, Micah, has moved back to town and joined the football team. The problem is that he practices their religious upbringing of Judaism. Anti-Semitism is something he has to deal with and for Essie it is easier to just pretend she doesn't know him. To admit he is part of her family could be at the cost of her new found popularity. Now she has to decide what is most important in her life, family or friends. Dealing with religion can be difficult at any time or age. Add trying to fit in and it becomes more difficult to decide what is more important. This book deals mostly with what a teenager will do to fit in. This reader has read several books very similar with minor twists and it is really nothing new. Not a bad or great book, just another average book trying to be great. This book is recommended for readers between 7-10 grades and has an Accelerated Reader level of 4.1. It is appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

***Taking Care of Mama***

By Mitra Modarressi

This story is about how a raccoon family takes care of mama when she has a fever and has to stay in bed. When mama starts feeling better, the family notices what a mess the house is, so they work hard to clean it up for her. The story depicts a helpful, caring family who appreciates their mom at the end of the day. It would be a great book for lower elementary students and has cute illustrations. It is appropriate for any library.

Joyce Sullivan

***Lola and the Boy Next Door***

By Stephanie Perkins

Growing up, Lola has had a crush on her next door neighbor, Cricket Bell. She thought the feelings were mutual until she doesn't get invited to Cricket's birthday party, and then he and his family move away the next day without Cricket saying goodbye. Imagine her shock when after two years they move back and Cricket is once again in her life. Now feelings that she thought were gone are back and she's not sure where her love lies. Is Max, her new love, the one for her or is it fun and easy to be with Cricket? This is a light, fanciful high-school romance with all the right elements to keep the reader's attention to the very end. This will make a great addition to your young adult collection. This book is recommended for readers in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and up and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

***Dodger for Sale***

By Jordan Sonnenblick

Dodger, a blue baboon genie, is only visible to Willie and his friend, Lizzie. They become concerned when a For Sale sign is put up on their magical Field of Dreams (the woods in their neighborhood). Many twists and turns in the plot involve leprechauns, a missing sister, and a class bully. Lots of imagination is used in the story that would be great for upper-elementary children and good for any library. It is the third book in the Dodger and Me series.

Joyce Sullivan

***Theodore Boone: The Abduction***

By John Grisham

This mystery is a good read for fifth-grade on up. Young adults, and even older ones, will enjoy this fast paced mystery. Theo Boone's best friend, April Finnemore, is abducted from her home in the middle of the night. Her mother has left her alone and her never-present hippie dad takes her with him on band gigs in other states. While the police follow the wrong lead after an escaped convict, Theo and his friend get online and find the whereabouts of her dad, and enlist Theo's uncle to help them get April back.

Joyce Sullivan

***David Goes to School***

By David Shannon

David's behavior at school is not good. At the end of the day, his punishment is cleaning the desks after school. He does a good job cleaning and can go home. This book is for K-1 and might be used to discuss proper classroom behavior and be a good addition to any library. It has nice colorful illustrations.

Joyce Sullivan

***Out in Left Field***

By Don Lemna

This story takes place in 1947 in Montana. Donald is a 10 year-old boy who misses a pop-fly during a baseball game, gets a big knot on his forehead, and loses the game. He is humiliated and teased by a class bully, Axel. Donald attempts hockey, archery, skiing, and other activities trying to be really good at something. Nothing goes well for Donald (but the events are humorous to the reader) until near the end of the year when he realizes everyone has forgotten the baseball game and he has become good at a variety of activities. His teacher was right when she said "Out of every failure a greater success can come, although it may come from another direction." This book would be good for fourth grade and up.

Joyce Sullivan

***Ghosts of the Titanic***

By Julie Lawson

The story is told in two time-frames. Angus Seaton is a 17 year-old boy who helps with the recovery of bodies from the wreckage of the Titanic in 1912. Kevin Messenger is a 12 year-old boy in modern times, who is always in trouble at school or with his dad. When Kevin's dad inherits a house in Halifax, Nova Scotia that belonged to Angus Seaton, he has no idea why. When the family goes to Halifax, Kevin is haunted by the ghost of a woman looking for her boy, Michael. Angus had been haunted by the same ghost. Kevin solves the mystery when he discovers Michael was his grandfather and survivor of the Titanic. Sixth-grade through high school would enjoy this book especially if they like supernatural fiction. This would be a great addition to any library.

Joyce Sullivan

***Penguins***

By Penelope Arlon

Discover all the different breeds of penguins in this informational book. This book explains life cycles, habitats, nesting, and how penguins swim. Everything you need to know about penguins is in this book. This book has a special online section. There are clear descriptors, intricate pictures, and maps that set it apart from other books. *Penguins* is a wonderful book for children to explore the faraway places where penguins live. This book is recommended for grades 2-6 and for any library collection.

Lara Morrow

**Glimmer**

By Phoebe Kitanidis

Set in creepy Summer Falls, an apparently perfect town, two teenagers awake with no recollection of who they are or how they got there. The story is told by each one, in turn, as they try to unearth their pasts, the reason they lost their memories, and why Summer Falls' residents are so lethargic and strange. This book is similar in style to *Imaginary Girls* by nova Ren Suma and has an appropriate cover. It is a very well-written story that kept my interest right up to the end. I wouldn't be surprised if there is (or will soon be) a movie in the works. This book is for Middle School and High School readers as well as any library collection.

Jennie Schneider

**Ellie McDoodle- Most Valuable Player**

By Ruth McNally Barshaw

Ellie and her friend join the soccer team, and Ellie's dad is the coach. Ellie prefers her "Journey of the Mind" club as she is really not an athlete. She has to decide between the two, when both end up having tournaments on the same day. This is a story about coming to terms with our strengths and weaknesses. This story is told in words and "doodles" (illustrations-hand drawn). It is similar in appearance to *Dork Diaries* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, but really geared more towards girls. I will probably order this series for my library—its structure (text and doodles) would appeal to reluctant readers. Note: Also an Accelerated Reader book. This book is recommended for grades 3-5 and for any library collection.

Jennie Schneider

**Beauty**

By Lisa Daily

When one of Molly's best friends joins in the laughter at Molly's expense at the town fair, Molly only wants to get away from the crowd. Heading for the fish pond which has always made her feel better, but she is disappointed to find it closed. Sitting and feeling sorry for herself, she is surprised when Dharma, a portrait artist, offers to sketch her. Molly tells her why she is sad and that she wishes she was the most beautiful person in Miracle, Ohio. The next morning all Molly's dreams have come true. Not only is she beautiful but she is also popular and everyone is vying for her attention. The only problem is that now she is losing her best friends and even Hunter, the guy next door, whom she has had a crush on for two years is not sure he likes her. Beauty doesn't seem to be all it's cracked up to be, and now Molly is searching for Dharma to have her change her back into the person she was before the portrait. Though pretty predictable, this is a fun book that will have you saying "be careful what you wish for". This book is recommended for grades 7-10.

Diane Limoges

***Dragonborn***

By Toby Forward

Sam is an apprentice to the great wizard Flaxfield. Now Sam must decide whether he wants to find someone else to take him on or does he just give it all up. When Flaxfield's former apprentices all arrive for the finishing, and doubt whether Sam really is an apprentice, Sam and his dragon Starback take off on their own to find a new teacher. When Starback leaves to protect Sam from his enemies, Sam is left to fend for himself with danger in the form of bad magic everywhere. The book has potential but there are too many characters and it is hard to tie things together. Most young readers will be frustrated and will stop reading it long before they find out how it ends. Though this is a series, it is doubtful that many will be standing in line waiting for the next one in the series to arrive. This book is for reader's grades 3-5.

Diane Limoges

***Thou Shalt Not Road Trip***

By Antony John

Luke Dorsey, a junior in high school, had written the best seller "Hallelujah". Now he's road tripping from California to St. Louis, Missouri, on a book signing tour with his brother and Fran, his ex-love interest. Murphy's Law seems to be in full force. Anything that can go wrong does; from overweight carry-on luggage, to the car breaking down. He seems to always be late for the signings and once he gets there, things never go the way he expects them to. And trying to understand why Fran has changed so much only adds to the reasons Luke can't wait to have tour over and done with. This is the sort of book every parent would pick for their child to read. The problem is that most young readers will have no desire to read it. The idea behind the plot and the final two or three chapters are good, though a little cheesy. There is a lot of rambling throughout most of the book dragging it to the conclusion. This book is for 7<sup>th</sup> grade readers and up.

Diane Limoges

***The Hallelujah Flight!***

By Phil Bildner

Two African American men in the 1930s had a dream to fly across the country. Their flight, they hoped, would inspire people who were made low by the depression. Based on a true story, James Banning and his co-pilot fly from LA to New York in an OXX6 Eagle Rock plane. This is a wonderful story that can inspire students that dreams can come true if you have the determination to keep working for it. This book is recommended for 4<sup>th</sup> grade readers or any library collection.

Lara Morrow